

The General Supervision System

Schools in the State of Maine are organized into School Administrative Units (SAUs) as defined by Maine Statute, 20-A MRSA Section 1 (26): "School administrative unit" means the state-approved unit of school administration and includes a municipal school unit, school administrative district, community school district, regional school unit or any other municipal or quasi-municipal corporation responsible for operating or constructing public schools, except that it does not include a career and technical education region. Beginning July 1, 2009, "school administrative unit" means the state-approved unit of school administration and includes only the following:

- A. A municipal school unit;
 - B. A regional school unit formed pursuant to chapter 103-A;
 - C. An alternative organizational structure as approved by the commissioner and approved by the voters;
 - D. A school administrative district that does not provide public education for the entire span of kindergarten to grade 12 that has not reorganized as a regional school unit pursuant to chapter 103-A;
 - E. A community school district that has not reorganized as a regional school unit pursuant to chapter 103-A;
 - F. A municipal or quasi-municipal district responsible for operating public schools that has not reorganized as a regional school unit pursuant to chapter 103-A;
 - G. A municipal school unit, school administrative district, community school district, regional school unit or any other quasi-municipal district responsible for operating public schools that forms a part of an alternative organizational structure approved by the commissioner; and
 - H. A public charter school authorized under chapter 112 by an entity other than a local school board.
- Throughout this APR, the terms SAU, LEA and district will be used interchangeably.

Child Development Services (CDS), is the governmental entity that serves as an Intermediate Educational Unit (IEU) of the Maine Department of Education (Maine DOE). As described in state statute: The Maine DOE Commissioner, "shall establish and supervise the state intermediate educational unit. The state intermediate educational unit is established as a body corporate and politic and as a public instrumentality of the State for the purpose of conducting child find activities as provided in 20 United States Code, Section 1412 (a) (3) for children from birth to under 6 years of age, ensuring the provision of early intervention services for eligible children from birth to under 3 years of age and ensuring a free, appropriate public education for eligible children at least 3 years of age and under 6 years of age." MRSA 20-A §7209(3).

The General Supervision System (GSS) manages and oversees the needs of children with disabilities ages birth to 20, as required by the federal Office of Special Education programs. GSS assumes the following responsibilities in eight components:

- 1) **State Performance Plan (SPP)**. The SPP is an accountability mechanism for the State and Maine school administrative units (SAUs), providing a measureable indication of Maine's performance in specific statutory priority areas of IDEA. Maine Department of Education (DOE) is responsible for the SPP. Maine DOE employs a SPP/APR Coordinator, whose responsibilities include working collaboratively with the data manager and federal programs coordinator for the collection of State and LEA data and performance measures, corrections of noncompliance and activities

supporting LEAs improving results for children with disabilities. The CDS Deputy Director and Quality Assurance Director are responsible for the collection of CDS data and performance measures, corrections of noncompliance and activities supporting CDS sites improving results for pre-school children with disabilities. Outcomes of the SPP inform monitoring activities (e.g., child find, transition from early intervention and postsecondary transition planning). Outcomes also inform practices in professional development through the State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) (e.g., LRE and postsecondary transition planning). APRs are published each year in order to document progress.

The requirement for public reporting on LEA performance is a critical provision in ensuring accountability and focusing on improved results for children with disabilities. The Department develops reports on six accountability indicators: Graduation, Dropout, Suspension/Expulsion, Classroom Placement, Parent Involvement and Post High School outcomes, and four compliance indicators: Disproportionate Representation in Special Education, Disproportionate Representation in Disability Categories, Evaluation Timeliness, and Transition Goals in IEP. Public reporting for the preschool population is incorporated within the APR.

The profiles provide indicator-specific performance and compliance data to the LEA and to the public for use in program improvement. The LEA profiles are used as the basis for determinations of LEA program performance. Each indicator is evaluated for level of determination to provide the LEA with measurement-specific feedback on their implementation of IDEA with regard to the SPP indicators listed above. An overall determination is assigned to each LEA in alignment with the requirements of the State Performance Plan (SPP): Meets Requirements; Needs Assistance; Needs Intervention; or Needs Substantial Intervention. These determinations set the level of support and intervention provided and define areas of required action and follow-up (see Component 6: Integrated Monitoring Activities)

In FFY13 the State aligned reporting K-12 SAU determinations with the completion of the school year, eliminating the year-long gap. In fall 2014 SAUs received determinations for the 2013-14 school year performance. Data profiles for school-aged students are posted on the SPP website: <http://www.maine.gov/doe/specialed/support/spp/leadeterminations.html>. Preschool determinations will be made in the spring of 2015 based on reporting requirements.

- 2) **Policies, Procedures & Effective Implementation.** The State of Maine has policies, procedures and effective implementation of practices that are aligned with and support the implementation of IDEA. The policies and procedures include descriptions of methods the State will use to detect non-compliance and ensure correction of non-compliance when found. Effective implementation of policies, procedures and practices also addresses program improvement through planning, coordination, incentives and follow-up. Policies, procedures, and effective implementation or practices, aligned with IDEA, are designed to support program improvement and focus attention on specific areas of compliance and program performance as identified through an analysis of data.

Resources including links to the IDEA, Chapter 101: Maine Unified Special Education Regulation Birth to Age Twenty, Policy on Standards-Based Individualized Education Program (IEP) Goals, and frequently asked questions are available on the following webpage: <http://www.maine.gov/doe/specialed/support/policies/index.html>.

- 3) **Data on Processes & Results.** As a part of the State's general supervision responsibilities, a chain of events occurs when data for students receiving special education are used for decision-making about program management and improvement.

- ✓ Collection and verification
- ✓ Examination and analysis
- ✓ Reporting of data
- ✓ Status determination
- ✓ Improvement

The Maine Department of Education's Data Warehouse puts data about Maine's schools in one place where it is easy to find and easy to understand. The Warehouse is a powerful tool for individuals who want to find out how their local schools are performing and how their performance compares to other Maine schools, districts and the entire state. The Data Warehouse also offers easily understandable data on Maine's student population, including students with special needs.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) section 618(a) (for children ages 3-21) and section 642 (for birth through age 2) requires that states make specific special education data available to the public. Most of the data, including special education student counts and student assessment data, are available in the Data Warehouse. The links are available on the following webpage: <http://www.maine.gov/doe/specialed/support/data/index.html>.

- 4) **Targeted Technical Assistance & Professional Development.** Targeted technical assistance and professional development enable Maine DOE and CDS to direct and impact the quality of the effective implementation of policies and procedures. Technical assistance, as part of an effective system of general supervision, is linked to the SPP indicators and outcomes for students. Technical assistance and capacity-building activities are implemented at varying levels and through multiple means such as websites, documents, coaching, mentoring, training of trainers, local, regional and/or statewide meetings and conferences, direct training from state personnel or from other resources.
- ✓ **Listen & Learn Series.** This biweekly webinar series is intended to offer professional development and technical assistance for special education directors and regional CDS directors in the field.
 - ✓ **Maine State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG).** The federally funded SPDG is designed to assist districts in Maine in reforming and improving their personnel preparation and professional development systems that will result in improved long-term and effective educational results for children with disabilities.
- 5) **Effective Dispute Resolution.** The timely resolution of complaints, mediations and due process actions is required for complaint dispute resolutions. Effective Dispute Resolution addresses matters related to due process procedures such as mediations, hearings and complaint investigations. The due process team provides training for mediators and hearing officials, school personnel, agency personnel and parents. Technical assistance is available to school districts and parents.

- ✓ **Due Process Hearing Decisions.** Maine's Hearing Decisions (referred to as "complaint" decisions under the IDEA) are the opinions of hearing officers assigned to determine whether violations of law under IDEA and/or State special education laws or regulations have occurred. Findings of violation result in a hearing order.
 - ✓ **State Complaint Investigation Reports.** Maine's State Complaint Investigation Reports contain findings of Maine's Education Commissioner as to whether violations of law under IDEA and/or State special education laws or regulations have occurred. Findings of violation result in a corrective action plan.
 - ✓ **Dispute Resolution Procedures & Forms.** Guidance regarding mediations, individual and systemic State complaint investigations, and hearings is provided. Model forms with the elements required under the IDEA are also available.
- 6) **Integrated Monitoring Activities.** The Maine Department of Education Office of Special Services and Child Development Services implement the birth to twenty (B-20) General Supervision System to manage and oversee all aspects of effective implementation and integrated monitoring activities. Evaluations and interventions focus on improving infant, toddler and school-age student outcomes. The process is designed to enhance partnerships among the Maine DOE Office of Special Services, Child Development Services (CDS), LEAs, other educational and community agencies, service providers, and parents in implementing Part C and Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). These partnerships focus on early intervention and special education services and systems that directly impact results for children, and on the development and implementation of improvement strategies to address identified needs.

The Maine Department of Education monitoring activities are dedicated to improving educational results and purposeful outcomes for all children with disabilities. The Department continues to ensure districts and regional CDS sites provide programs and services for children with disabilities as described and required under federal law Section 616 of the 2004 Amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Multiple data sources and methods are used to monitor every SAU in the state. Integrated on-site and off-site monitoring activities ensure Maine's capacity to identify and correct noncompliance and facilitate improved performance. The Department has certain requirements for monitoring activities for public special education programs, charter school programs and special purpose private school programs.

Monitoring programs address the GSS activity of Improvement and Correction through the development of findings after the on-site and desk audit and implementation of the corrective action plan by LEAs and special purpose private schools.

- ✓ **Preschool Special Education:** Child Development Services implements CDS site monitoring, findings, and corrections, examining for compliance with IDEA and Maine Unified Special Education Regulations, and to increase and improve outcomes for identified children. All CDS sites are monitored annually, provided letter of findings, required to submit corrective action plans and are provided determinations. The Commissioner of Education provides certification of the information by submitting the letters of findings and determinations to all sites.

- ✓ **Public Special Education Program Monitoring:** Program review for all SAUs involves both desk audits and site visits in accordance with the General Supervision System, which includes:

1. Program review geared towards correcting noncompliance with indicators in the State Performance Plan (SPP).
2. Focused monitoring activities geared toward identifying solutions and activities to enhance and improve performance.
3. Technical assistance geared toward identifying solutions and activities to enhance and improve outcomes for children receiving special education services.

We have designed a projected six-year monitoring cycle. This cycle may also be used to assist the Maine DOE in planning and delivering statewide professional development and technical assistance. Each year, the General Supervision System on-site and desk audits for compliance monitoring include record reviews, interviews, and document reviews to identify noncompliance and assess growth toward federal and state targets for special education. Program review is a process which purposefully selects priority areas to examine for compliance and FAPE. The Maine DOE will examine identified areas for compliance to increase and improve outcomes for identified children. The Maine DOE uses an improvement planning process to ensure correction of noncompliance that can be accomplished in a timely manner based on the development of the Electronic Monitoring Tool (EMT).

- ✓ **Charter School Special Education Program Monitoring:** Information and procedures for commission authorization of public charter schools can be found on the Maine Charter School Commission webpage: <http://www.maine.gov/csc/>.

The Charter School Commission collaborates with the Maine DOE, Office of Special Services to ensure that policies and procedures are in place to provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) for students with disabilities according to the regulations set forth by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Maine Unified Special Education Regulations (MUSER).

The Office of Special Services provides two years of individualized support as charter schools further refine their special education programs. After the charter school's second full year of operation, it is entered into a monitoring "cohort" with other public schools.

- ✓ **Special Purpose Private School Program Monitoring:** The Office of Special Services program monitoring is dedicated to improving educational results and functional outcomes for all children with disabilities. The Maine DOE continues to ensure that children placed in out-of-district placements, including Special Purpose Private Schools and hospital programs, are provided programs and services for children with disabilities as described by and required under federal law Section 616 of the 2004 Amendments to the Individual with Disabilities Act (IDEA). The requirements for continuing program approval for Special Purpose Private Schools can be found in the Maine Unified Special Education Regulations (MUSER), Chapter 101, Section XII,1.A-E.

Program monitoring of Special Purpose Private Schools occurs on a three-year cycle, and consists of both document submission and a site visit.

- 7) **Fiscal Accountability.** The state system of general supervision includes mechanisms to provide oversight in the distribution and use of IDEA funds at the state and local level. The State of Maine has procedures ensuring that fiscal resources are directed to areas needing improvement. The Maine DOE Federal Grant Fiscal Guidance (<http://www.maine.gov/doe/specialed/support/fiscal/index.html>) is a starting reference point to ensure fiscal accountability with federal and state regulations. Webinars and other resources are available to assist LEAs in the fiscal monitoring process. Activities are being developed to address and support LEAs determined to be high risk as a result of inadequate fiscal procedures that may be accompanied by additional programming concerns.
- 8) **Improvement, Correction, Incentives and Sanctions.** Within the State's Integrated Monitoring Activities LEAs receive results of on-site and desk reviews of their policies and procedures for ensuring a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. Findings of noncompliance are identified, LEAs are required to participate in a corrective action plan to correct noncompliance and participate in improvement activities to establish procedures that lead to positive outcomes for students (see Component 6: Integrated Monitoring Activities). Results of monitoring activities and student outcome data on the State Performance Plan are publicly reported on determinations made for LEAs every year (see Component 1: State Performance Plan).